

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 488

CG 031 653

AUTHOR Sandoz, Jeff
TITLE The Freshman Odyssey: Classical Metaphors for Counseling College Students.
PUB DATE 2002-03-00
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Counseling Association (New Orleans, LA, March 22-26, 2002).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Freshmen; *Counseling Techniques; Counseling Theories; Higher Education; Life Events; *Metaphors; *Mythology; *Student Adjustment
IDENTIFIERS *Campbell (Joseph); *Greek Mythology

ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the use of analogies and metaphors in counseling sessions with a focus on the college freshman experience as a living, contemporary example of how clients may experience mythic themes in their lives. Drawing from the ideas of Joseph Campbell, characters found in classical Greek mythology, as well as contemporary myths as revealed in literature and movies, this paper explains how myth, regardless of culture of origin or temporality, can be used by counselors as a metaphor for the student's everyday challenges in living. The elements of myth, including classical and modern examples of myth, are explained. Appreciation for the applicability of myth as metaphor is explained using contemporary myth and situations in which mythic themes are readily evident, such as the college freshman experience and the graduate school experience. (GCP)

The Freshman Odyssey: Classical Metaphors for Counseling College Students

Jeff Sandoz

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Sandoz

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to
improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this
document do not necessarily represent
official OERI position or policy.

031653



The Freshman Odyssey: Classical Metaphors for Counseling College Students

by

Jeff Sandoz, Ph.D.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Abstract

This article is based on the author's 3 hour workshop presentation at the 2002 American Counseling Association National Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana on March 24, 2002. The presentation was entitled *Myth as Metaphor: Applications of Techniques in Counseling for College Students*. Content for the presentation included information derived from a course at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette entitled "The Freshman Seminar". In addition, the analogies and metaphors from the aforementioned sources have been used in actual counseling sessions by the author with a focus on the college freshmen experience as a living, contemporary example of how clients experience mythic themes in their lives. Drawing from the ideas of Joseph Campbell, characters found in classical Greek Mythology, as well as contemporary myths as revealed in literature and movies, the information found within the article will explain how myth, regardless of culture of origin or temporality, can be used by the counselor as metaphor for the student's everyday challenges in living. The elements of myth, including classical examples and modern examples of myth will be explained to the audience. Appreciation for the applicability of myth as metaphor will be developed using contemporary myth and situations in which mythic themes are readily evident, such as the college freshman experience and the graduate school experience.

Acknowledgments and dedication:

The author wishes to offer his appreciation for the continual guidance by David Barry, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Without his support this article would not have been possible. Dean Barry encouraged his participation on the Freshmen Seminar Committee and allowed the author to teach several sections of *The Freshman Odyssey* from 1999-2001. This article is dedicated to Dean Barry in gratitude for his help and friendship.

The Freshman Odyssey: Classical Metaphors for Counseling College Students

by

Jeff Sandoz, Ph.D.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Introduction

There is an opinion which is held by many college professors today who teach freshmen. That opinion is that many of the entering freshmen, who have just graduated from high school, are entering college unprepared. Although most of the students are well-prepared academically, many may not be well-prepared emotionally. As these young students adjust to the rigors of college life, many become overwhelmed, lose heart, become discouraged, quit trying and fail.

Counselors on the college campus offer guidance and encouragement to many of the students and most students respond well in individual counseling and group therapy. One method which provides large amounts of information in an abbreviated form is called the metaphor. Metaphors offer a type of shorthand of behaviors which can be seen as either helpful or not helpful. This article offers a series of metaphors derived from mythical stories. The source of these stories varies from Greek mythology to the legend of King Arthur.

The Path of the Hero

Joseph Campbell described the path of the hero in his book entitled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell reviewed all of the hero stories from the myths and legends of

diverse cultures throughout the world and derived a repeated theme. The path of the hero in these stories includes a threefold process which includes a separation, an initiation and a return.

This three-fold path of separation, initiation and return is followed by every hero in historical accounts as well as fictional writings. The separation involves being cut off from a secure home base. Basically, our would-be-hero is on his own and must fend for himself. The separation involves a process of leaving one's family friends or culture.

The initiation includes being on one's own and learning to be self-sufficient. More importantly the hero begins to explore the inner terrain of fears, conquers those fears and finds an internal strength in the process. The initiation involves his making that dark journey inward. The hero does this by facing temptations, confronting fears and by mapping out the internal terrain of one's emotional, psychological and spiritual life.

After encountering and conquering one's self inwardly, the hero focuses on external tasks and manifestations. These often deal with conflict involving right overcoming wrong and opposing some unjust group. This aspect is often found in the return in which the hero revisits family, friends or culture as a man in the fullest sense. After the villains have been vanquished, the hero's return is highlighted with his giving to others the gift of his experience. This gift is the treasure which is shared with others and is of benefit to them. The following table includes concepts related to Campbell's Path of the Hero. The term is called psychological differentiation. It is also known the process of individuation of self. The final result of the path of the hero *is* the process of individuation. The hero possesses a solid self which is made of stable and internalized characteristics. A solid self enables the hero to stand firm and not to sway under pressure. Initially the newly formed hero is Challenged by others who want to test his mettle and see what he is made of and if he really is a hero.

[Table 1] Outline for the path of the hero

<u>Separation</u>	[Leaving home & attending college]
1) Call & Refusal	[Fear & reluctance]
2) Supernatural Aid	[Prayers: graduation completion statistics]
3) Crossing Thresholds/ Boundaries	[Exiled from home, decided to leave to attend college]
<u>Initiation</u>	[Making the dark journey inward]
1) Trials	[Problems in adjusting and settling in at school]
2) Mentor	[Finding a successful model, or helpful guide]
3) Mapping internal terrain	[Discovering fears and weaknesses]
4) Epiphany– Realization	[Facing fears with strategies to overcoming them]
<u>Return</u>	[Conquering self & the external world]
1) Refusing to return	[Comfort and predictability of school environment]
2) Return	[Triumph, graduation returning home]
3) Readjustment/ Rejection	[Seeing home with a different set of “educated” eyes]

The following table offers an overview of characters from Greek mythology which are used as an implicit comparison for life events and behaviors for college students. This table includes the name of a Greek hero/heroine along with the metaphorical task to be completed by the college student. Details of each hero will follow in subsequent tables. Counselors may find the outline format to be useful in actual counseling sessions for individual clients or in a group setting.

[Table 2] Pairing the Hero/Heroine with the Metaphorical Task

<u>Greek Heroes</u>	<u>Metaphorical Tasks</u>
Odysseus	[Spending years away from home]
Herakles	[Twelve Labors to complete before graduating]
Theseus	[Killing the Minotaur “Getting rid of the Bull”]
Jason	[Quest of the Golden Fleece – getting the “sheepskin” or diploma]
Perseus	[Slaying Medusa (fear) & rescuing others]
<u>Greek Heroine</u>	
Psyche	[Overcoming restricting stereotypes through successive task completion]
<u>Greek Goddess</u>	
Athena	[Becoming a goddess of wisdom and helping others]

Odysseus

The Freshman Odyssey begins with Odysseus. It took him twenty years to return home from his adventures at Troy. Hopefully, it will not take the student twenty years to graduate. Specific life events are likely to occur for the college freshman which run parallel to the exploits of this hero. The path of this hero provides a good example of **what not to do**. However, he is redeemed by his follow-through – a method of correcting mistakes.

College counselors may wish to:

- 1) Review the path of Odysseus with the student.
- 2) Encourage the student to see the similarities to college life.
- 3) Have the student/client talk with other students who are successful and follow their suggestions.
- 4) Determine what college courses are to be taken and in what order. (Hint: See suggested courses by semester in catalogue.)
- 5) Have the student predict what events could interfere with graduation.
- 6) Write reflections of overloading the ship (metaphor for doing too much, heavy course-load, work schedule and an active social-life.
- 7) Point out to the student to learn from the mistakes made by Odysseus by avoiding certain things in life as these prevented Odysseus from attaining his goal in a timely manner.

Table 3 offers a brief outline of the metaphor-related tasks which many college freshmen may relate. The assignment offered by the counselor may be to relate the path of Odysseus to college life and to determine what course may taken to avoid potential problems.

[Table 3] Odysseus [Twenty years to return home or to graduate]

1. Navigation Skills – Managing the system, rowing, using stars for guidance
2. Lotus Eaters – Drug use distracts from primary goal
3. Encountering Polyphemus – Naive trust, countering a lack of depth perception
4. Floating island of King Aeolus – Fraternity/Sorority Rush
5. Guidance of Teirisias – Willing to go to hell and back to find a successful path
6. Circe's Island – Appetites transform crew into pigs
7. Avoiding the Siren's Call – Making a commitment to completion of school
8. Scylla & Charybdis – Avoiding depression and anxiety through counseling
9. Calypso – Completing a degree program on time
10. Returning Home – Facing new responsibilities

Developing Good Navigation Skills

Following the metaphor/analogy along through Homer's *Odyssey* the student may learn to develop navigation skills. In this process the student learns to make a map, manage the system, rowing, and to use stars for guidance. The student is urged to get actual map of the college campus and locate the specific buildings in which his/her classes are held. Color coded highlighter pens (e.g. blue for Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes and red for Tuesday-Thursday classes) are helpful in providing a path from building to building. Scouting each classroom in advance of the first day of class is suggested to avoid the stormy passage of students rushing between classes. This is a "you are here" map for the student to assist in discovering both one's location and one's destination. It is very important to know one's way around campus to avoid being late for class. Counselors may find this method helpful in assisting the student to find the location of other various sites not visited in the present semester, but for reference in the future.

The metaphor of "rowing" provides various academic support services to facilitate effective learning. Tutoring may be offered for freshmen and sophomore courses as well as many upper level courses. Such programs provide an opportunity for students to receive special academic assistance and to clarify and review subject matter presented in the classroom. Other services

include assessment of student needs, supplemental instruction, and short courses for study improvement. Most universities offer a library of microcomputer and video-taped instruction, study guides, and background information needed in specific is available to supplement classroom instruction and individual tutoring.

Constellations of stars have been used to navigate by night. Guidance from the “stars” may include academic navigation from advisors who help to guide students when they are in the dark academically. Advisors, peers and professors may act as a mentors to offer suggestions to stay on course. Some may share their own life experiences on how to overcome the turbulent storms in social, emotional, developmental as well as academic areas. The “stars” metaphor also includes using one’s own personal goals as a motivating guide.

Managing the system

In order for a student to navigate college it is important to have a realistic assessment of one’s level of skills. Special services are offered for students with disabilities. Services may be available through Junior Division for facilitating adjustment to college for students with disabling conditions. Students may receive individual counseling, assistance for scheduling and needed arrangements in class conditions, housing, parking and other campus offerings. Auxiliary aides and services as well as information on campus resources for students with disabilities are also offered. In addition, a library of career literature is available to help students decide on a choice of majors and careers. The professional staff can provide academic, career, and personal counseling along with supervision within a special learning center. Tutors offer services and individualized instruction in specialized areas, along with academic computer disks and video tapes. Taken together academic counseling, tutoring and study skills training can help students to better managing the system.

Avoiding the Lotus-Eaters

Cultural norms and mores have changed over the past 50 years with the influx of recreational drug use. Drug use distracts students from their primary goal which is to complete a level of educational training and receive a degree. The immediate gratification provided by drugs can cause the student to lose focus on the goal of graduation. Some of Odysseus's sailors lost their ambition and had forgotten their mission after eating the fruit offered by the Lotus-Eaters. Drugs may be taken by students who seek to reduce stress and become seduced by physical pleasure of euphoria associated with drugs resulting in a loss of ambition. On-campus counseling is available at most university and college settings.

Encountering Polyphemus

Many students are leaving home for the first time and may have developed a naive trust when dealing with issues that one's parents handled while the student was in high school. Some individuals working in sales often focus on one thing: selling the product even if it is not needed by the student. Like Polyphemus they have a lack of depth perception – viewing the student as a quick sale and not interested in what the customer truly needs. When receiving bad advice they may defer to the experience of others namely students and/or faculty in whom a trust has been developed. The student may learn to shop elsewhere for car repair, purchasing appliances, or renting an apartment.

Floating island of King Aeolus

Imagine a party on a floating island upon which one is free to pursue pleasure and is devoid of personal responsibilities. Landing on this island begins with fraternity and sorority rush which includes drinking alcohol, feasting at raucous events with a variety of entertainment. Events may

get out of hand with too much time being spent at parties as the king's gift of a bag of wind was opened irresponsibly which caused all to be blown off course

Guidance of Teiresias

The results of chasing the good life in college with the newly found freedom of not being accountable to one's parents may end abruptly when the mid-term grades are received by one's parents along with progress reports. This process may serve as a wake-up call for the freshman student. The immediate task is to find a mentor, possibly an older student or a faculty member who will guide one to learn what to do and not to do. Just as Odysseus entered the underworld to seek advice from the prophet Teiresias so too, the freshman student may become willing to go to hell and back to find a successful path in college.

Circe's Island

Many young men begin to explore base appetites by seeking the following biological functions in excess: Overeating, drinking too much alcohol, a cycle of sleeping too much or not enough, engaging in sex, and the excessive pursuit of excitement. Freshmen males may resemble the crew of Odysseus's ship by having their appetites transform them into pigs.

Avoiding the Siren's Call

Odysseus finally made a commitment to return home just as some students become dedicated to completion of school. They learn to avoid temptations by becoming temporarily deaf to the calls of pleasurable distractions. Odysseus put wax in ears of rowers while becoming bound to the mast. Students must find analogous behaviors by which one can make a commitment to the successful completion of school.

Scylla & Charybdis

At times the pressure of the long journey of getting a degree can wear down a student. Apprehension associated with the daily grind may lead to a monstrous test anxiety [Scylla] through counseling. Discouragement and lack of personal care and maintenance may lead to feelings of being pulled into the vortex of the whirlpool of depression [Charybdis]. Students may avoid the common college pitfalls of anxiety and depression by seeking counseling on campus.

Calypso

Just as Calypso promised Odysseus immortality and eternal youth if he were to stay with her, so too, the student may experience the seduction of college life. While in college one's career is put on hold. Plans of the fifth year junior changing one's major for the twentieth time delay adult responsibilities. The Calypso syndrome may tempt one to be an eternal student by failing to complete a degree program on time as well as forgetting about those at home who paid for the college tuition.

Returning Home

After receiving the degree the student begins to face new responsibilities such as getting a job and beginning a new career. This process may involve the clearing away of obstacles and the freeing of those at home [like Odysseus's Penelope from being caught up repetitive tasks].

Herakles

Perhaps the greatest of all of the Greek heroes was Herakles. He accomplished many tasks which could have led to his death. However, Herakles persevered and was victorious. As students progress from one academic year to the next they, like Herakles, must overcome insurmountable tasks. Table 4 displays an synopsis of the mythic labors of Herakles along with university-tasks which college freshmen may appreciate. The assignment offered by the counselor may help a college freshman to develop strategies for success to overcome the daunting tasks of college life.

The examples offered by Herakles provide a rather detailed motif of life events which are likely to occur for the college freshman. The path of this hero provides a good example of **what needs to be done**. The path of Herakles as a hero-model is highlighted by his persistence.

College counselors may wish to:

- 1) Examine the path of Herakles with the student.
- 2) Encourage the student to view the similarities of these Herculean tasks to completing college.
- 3) Have the student talk with mentors who have been successful with completing specific tasks.
- 4) Ascertain which tasks are to be taken and in what order.
- 5) Ask the student to list the top twelve labors to complete before graduating and if these are related to the metaphorical tasks of Herakles.
- 6) Have the student verbalize which tasks appear to be the most difficult.

[Table 4] Herakles [Hercules] [Twelve Labors to complete before graduating]

1. Killing the Lion – finding the courage to come to school
2. Killing the Hydra – divide and conquer one course at a time
3. Capturing the Boar – how do get through boring lectures
4. Capturing the Hind – persistence: after a year of pursuit
5. Capturing Stymphalian Birds – herding in a rough schedule
6. Cleaning out the Stables – managing Bovine Scatology
7. Capturing the Bull – lengthy struggle: improving study skills
8. Harnessing the Mares – managing technology: library, computers, e-mail, etc.
9. Obtaining Hippolyta’s girdle – exercise: staying in physical shape
10. Conquering monsters – how to get through tough courses
11. Obtaining Golden Apples – fruits of labor: GPA & degree
12. Return from Underworld – going to hell and back freeing Theseus and capturing Cerebus

Killing the Lion

For some students the process of making a decision to attend college takes a great deal of courage. This is especially true for the student who is the first in the family (including parents) to pursue a college education. This task may seem impossible for some. In the Greek myth, Herakles found courage in killing a beast, the Nemean lion, a creature with an impenetrable hide. Conventional weapons failed to hurt the animal and Herakles resorted to strangling the beast with his bare hands. He used the beast’s claws to tear into the hide which he wore for as a trophy and for his protection. A similar fate is shared by the students who find the courage to persevere until the lionskin (or sheepskin) is within their possession.

Killing the Hydra

The number of college courses taken in one semester must be carefully planned. The strategy is one of “divide and conquer” by completing all of the courses taken during the semester. However, if a course is not completed during the regularly scheduled semester, the student may opt for the temporary course status known as an incomplete. If the course is not completed in a

timely manner, then a failing mark appears on the student's transcript. One of the problems with an incomplete status in a course is that the student must re-double efforts to complete it.

Herakles was faced with a similar dilemma when he attempted to kill the Lernaean Hydra. With the removal of each severed head, two grew back. His solution was to burn the severed necks with a torch. Students may find that strategy helpful as they "burn the midnight oil" to vanquish a course by semester's end.

Capturing the Boar

While many collegiate instructors have performed advanced research in specific areas and have a considerable degree of knowledge in their respective fields of study, they may lack the ability to convey information in a classroom with sufficient excitement or enthusiasm. Students may find the lectures to be boring. The next strategy involves getting through boring lectures. Some students accept the challenge by sitting as close to the instructor's podium as possible. Others find vigilant eye-contact helpful. Still others pursue with tape recorders which track every syllable. Herakles tracked and killed the wild boar of Erymanthus by following the path very closely. So too, students who wish to conquer boring lectures must devise a system to overcome this beast.

Capturing the Hind

At times students become impatient and want the instant gratification of superb results. Attempt to hurry the process may cause one to get off of the track. Persistence is the key and is often found only after a year of pursuit. Herakles pursued the deer with golden horns for a full year before he finally arrived at a successful capture. Slow and steady may be the best way to achieve good results and this process takes time..

Capturing Stymphalian Birds

How can a student handle a rough schedule? When events overwhelm a student there is the tendency for one to become flighty by being overrun with hassles and lose focus on learning. Such a wounding process occurs painfully when it results in one's test grade becoming "shot down" with a failing mark. Herakles was faced with a similar problem as he was required to herd in a rowdy group of flighty birds – birds which would shoot feathers like arrows wounding others. Herakles made a loud noise which caused the birds to take flight and he turned his arrows on them. Students may learn the "fight fire with fire" method by taking advantage of the problematic situation of a rough schedule by working it toward one's favor rather than against.

Cleaning out the Stables

Studying becomes difficult when the environment is cluttered, littered, or out of control. When one's life is in disarray due to piles of work, things never being put away, or when one is hampered by a slovenly roommate, then studying becomes an impossibility. Students in such a state often report being tired of the bovine scatology which surrounds them. No one will clean up the mess. However, the mess must be cleared before any studying is done. Herakles had to divert the flow of two rivers to clean out the stables which housed vast herds of cattle. Making the mess is easy and cleaning it up is a bother especially when the mess is within one's living or study area. Strategies for cleaning out the stables may involve a group effort of brainstorming and hard work.

Capturing the Bull

Some students may be bull-headed about their level of study skills. Some may feel that they are well organized. However, many of these students continue to suffer from poor grades until

these areas are identified and dealt with in a thorough manner. Herakles took the Cretan bull by the horns and trained it. This can be a terrific strategy for the freshman student also.

Harnessing the Mares

Some students feel as if they are being eaten alive unless they can managing the new technology of devices within the library, conquer the use of personal computers and master the means of communication through e-mail. Herakles found himself in the same predicament when he faced the mares of Diomedes which ate human flesh. He tamed them by turning their master over to them. Students may find someone who has mastered computers and other technologies on campus. This strategy will prevent one from being torn up piece-meal.

Obtaining Hippolyta's girdle

Physical exercise helps to maintain mental balance as well as staying in good physical shape. Herakles thought this device contained magical properties. Physical exercise may just provide the magic needed to clear one's mind after a marathon study session.

Conquering monsters

Some courses pose a greater demand on the student. In fact some courses require the student to put in three times the effort than a regular course would. Strategies are needed when attempting to get through tough courses. Herakles devised a winning strategy to conquer Geryon, a three bodied monster, and Orthus, the two-headed dog.

Obtaining Golden Apples

Only after several semesters is the student able to see the true fruits of labor. These include a

solid grade point average and a long sought after degree. Herakles realized at this point that he was nearing the end of his labors and saw the end in sight after years of hard work.

Return from Underworld

Herakles followed Joseph Campbell's pattern of the Path of the Hero by his going to hell and back to free his friend Theseus and capturing Cerebus, the multi-headed hell hound. So too, students acting as a hero may help out a friend by tutoring or offering sage advice to one who is faltering.

Theseus

This hero offers a fine example of examining the curriculum of study, doing what is necessary and finding the quickest way out. He was the first to conquer the labyrinth and faced the monster known as a Minotaur. Some college freshmen may find the curriculum catalogue to be just as terrifying as the Bull-beast. Table 5 displays the brief outline of Theseus who overcame the dreaded Minotaur and was not lost in the maze work of college courses leading up to a degree. The counselor may resort to storytelling in which the role of Ariadne may seem appropriate.

- [Table 5] Theseus** [Killing the Minotaur "Getting rid of the Bull"]
Minotaur & Labyrinth – Finding **Ariadne's thread**: a suggested course of curriculum
1. The way in is the way out – finding successful model .
 2. Finding the right path – discovering an area of interest .
 3. Conquering the beast – completing the course-work.
 4. Emerging triumphant – graduation

The way in is the way out

Theseus found a successful model. Ariadne's thread was anchored for him outside of the treacherous maze know as the college catalogue. She offered to him a suggested course (or

curriculum) for him to follow. He could unroll the thread semester by semester and find his way out with a degree at the end of four years.

Finding the right path

While the counselor may offer the guiding thread, it is the job of the student to discover an area of interest for study. Four years is a long time and the sooner the student finds the “right path” of study, then the sooner the task will be completed.

Conquering the beast

The Minotaur is a flesh-eating beast. Some students may feel that one course of study is eating them up. Only the student can decide if it is worth the effort or if another major is best. Nevertheless completing the course-work can be grueling enough, but majoring in a course of study that one does not like may be foolhardy.

Emerging triumphant

All students face a moment of truth which includes facing fears and overcoming personal doubt. This process involves a rite of passage for some that is not realized until the moment of graduation. For some the pivotal moment involves the killing the Minotaur. This may be a process of growing up or simply “getting rid of the bull” in one’s own life. For others it may be the process of piloting within the labyrinth of college life. Crises are expected before emerging with the degree in hand

Jason

Perhaps Jason’s journey typifies the educational goal-setting moreso than the other Greek

students to improve study skills and get the tough work done by not taking the easy way out and assist in facing fears. Sometimes personal habits and a lack of insight may prevent our seeing solutions.

Fighting Talus

A giant bronze statue blocked the path of Jason's ship on the return home. The planning and development of work related strategies are helpful when applying learning for career planning.

Aspiring for the throne

With his sheepskin in hand Jason was able to searching for the right job. In his case it was ruling a country.

Perseus

This hero's tale involves getting help from others and helping others in the process. Perseus gets aid in the form of needed material to complete the job as well as advice in getting rid of personal fears. Later in his return he helps others. Table 7 offers a short outline of the path of Perseus.

[Table 7] Perseus [Slaying Medusa (fear) and rescuing others]

1. Divine Help – Getting the tools for the job: sandals, cap, pouch, shield and sword
2. Graeae Guidance – Getting needed information
3. Slaying Medusa – Facing and conquering the paralysis of fear
4. Rescuing Andromeda – Conquering the fear in others
5. Saving Danae – Helping mom to overcome problems back at home

Divine Help

Perseus is best known for his slaying of the Medusa. Some simply view the Medusa as a personification of one's fear which may paralyze by turning one into stone. Fears are best handled with the guide of a mentor or counselor. Getting advice from others could empower one with the tools for the job. Perseus received a pair of sandals (transportation), a cap of invisibility (for keeping a low-profile), a pouch or magic wallet (for finances and the ease of movement of personal belongings), a shield (protection) and a sword (safety and defense). Parents often provide funding for school although scholarships are available to equip students for college.

Graeae Guidance

Just as Perseus received help from the three sisters, so too, students are offered guidance from counselors on campus. Mental health counselors provide the needed information to the student especially with regard to getting rid of fears.

Slaying Medusa

On campus counseling services offer assistance to student in not only facing fears but in the devising of plan to conquer the paralysis associated with fear. Counseling sessions may help the student to prepare for dealing with life events and the emotions associated with them.

Rescuing Andromeda

After conquering his own fears as personified in Medusa, Perseus helps others to remove the fear from the lives of others. This is the "return" of the hero as described by Campbell.

Saving Danae

After returning Perseus was free to help his mother to overcome problems back at home.

Students become self-sufficient workers and assist parents as they approach their latter years.

The Path of the Heroine

Thus far only male figures have been examined in the hero's path. The feminine motif offers a few other details in addition to the traditional separation, initiation and return. The heroine must break free and overcome restricting stereotypes and she does so through successive task completion. Perhaps it is best to offer a few poor models first whereby our women readers will know **not to follow the examples of these characters** before launching into the story of Psyche.

[Table 8] The Path of the Heroine

Poor Models – *Do Not Follow Their Examples*

1. Iphigenia – Sacrificed self for Daddy or another male
2. Pandora – Made a decision but was abandoned due to the consequences]

Psyche as a Good Model [Overcoming restricting stereotypes, successive task completion]

1. Daddy's Sacrifice – Death of development to appease others
2. Mistress of Eros – “Mushroom management” love relationship
3. Confrontation & Abandonment – Self Reliance -vs- Emotional Dependence
4. 3 Tasks of Aphrodite – Grains, Wool & Beauty Lotion
5. Dying to Succeed – Self-Actualized, Self-Reliant, a Goddess]

Iphigenia

This young teen was the daughter of Agamemnon who allowed herself to be sacrificed in order to appease the goddess Artemis. The Greek soldiers grew restless and killed a sacred deer of the goddess who demanded a sacrifice in return. Agamemnon deceived his daughter into believing that she was to be married to a soldier prior to the departure for war. Instead she became the sacrifice for the actions of a male.

Pandora

She was first woman and was blamed for all of woes of the world. The god Zeus was angry at the Titan Prometheus for stealing fire and giving it to the humans. Zeus could not enact his revenge against the wise and crafty Prometheus. However, Zeus was able to retaliate against Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus. Zeus gave the irresistible Pandora to Epimetheus along with a jar that Zeus had forbidden anyone to open. Pandora opened the jar releasing a multitude of evil. Pandora was blamed for release and “the woman” was blamed for all of problems of the world. Regardless of the consequences, Pandora was correct in asserting her self by making a decision. No one wants to live a life of an automaton by being told what to do repeatedly. Pandora was slightly better off than Iphigenia in that Pandora made a decision and followed up with an action. Poor Iphigenia never made a decision and gave up her life.

Psyche

Daddy's Sacrifice

Psyche was a princess because her father was a king. Psyche was also a “princess” because she was daddy’s little girl. Because of her great beauty worshipers quit visiting the temple of the goddess, Aphrodite. Hurt and angered the goddess punished those who lived in the kingdom with blight, pestilence and drought. Aphrodite visited the king and promised to offer relief in exchange for the sacrifice of his daughter, Psyche. He reluctantly agreed and Psyche complied with his wish for her sacrifice. Like Iphigenia, Psyche agreed to the sacrifice of herself. This was a death of her own development to appease others.

Mistress of Eros

Psyche was to be dispatched by Eros, the son of Aphrodite. However, Eros became captivated by the beauty of Psyche and kept her in a hidden palace. This type of relationship for young girls has been referred to in college vernacular as a “mushroom management” love relationship (viz. mushrooms are kept in the dark and fed cow manure or “bovine scatology” in order to grow). Eros literally kept her in the dark so she could not see that he was a god. Days later when her sisters arrived to throw a memorial wreath into the chasm, they were surprised to see her alive. Although her clothes were tattered she assured her sisters that she was being well taking care of by a man whom she had never seen in the light of day. Her sisters convinced her that he was a monster and that she should light a lamp at night, see him for the monster that he is and kill him. Psyche reluctantly agreed to carry out to plan

Confrontation and Abandonment

However, in the middle of the night when she sees his beauty she swooned and is wounded by one of his love arrows. Eros is awakened when she splashes the hot oil from the burning lamp onto his shoulder wounding him and causing him to leave in anger. Psyche is caught in the dilemma between self-reliance and emotional dependence. Psyche wants to stand on her own feet as an independent woman, yet she misses the security, false though it may be, within a dependent relationship.

3 Tasks of Aphrodite

Aphrodite appeared in anger and asked for Psyche to prove her strong love for Eros. Psyche was given three impossible tasks to complete: the separation and proper storage of mixed grains, the acquisition of wool from flesh-eating rams and retrieval of beauty lotion from the

underworld.

Although Psyche is successful in the completion of first two tasks she uses a small portion of the beauty lotion which was poisoned and lead her death.

Dying to Succeed

Eros viewed her collapse and brought her to Zeus who allowed her to die as a human being, but resurrected her as a goddess. This process can be seen metaphorically in counseling as a young woman's attempt to become more self-actualized, self-reliant, and autonomous.

Athena

Although Athena was born a goddess she demonstrated heroic character in countering and crossing boundaries which were previously within a male dominated domain.

- | |
|---|
| <p>[Table 9] Athena [Goddess of wisdom]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A Splitting Headache – Being a pain in order to develop2. Assisting Perseus – Helping others to succeed3. Building the Argo – Building a vessel for success |
|---|

A Splitting Headache

In Greek mythology Athena was known as the goddess of wisdom. She was born fully formed and mature from the brow of Zeus after his head was split open with an ax to relieve a terrible headache. Interestingly enough, one metaphor which is quite common in today's culture involves a woman causing a man pain in order to develop. In order to break through "glass ceilings" many women today exhibit behaviors which disrupt of the "men only clubs" found

within the administrations of many businesses.

Assisting Perseus

After attaining equal status among the Greek gods Athena's main task was to help others to succeed. One of her proteges was Perseus whom she assisted to attain hero status.

Building the Argo

Another endeavor of Athena was to assist Jason in the building of the Argo. Many successful women today help others to build a vessel for success.

Conclusion

This article began with an opinion which is held by many college professors today who teach freshmen. And that opinion was that many of the new freshmen, who have just graduated from high school, are entering college unprepared emotionally. As these young students adjust to the rigors of college life, many become overwhelmed, lose heart, become discouraged, quit trying and fail. Counselors on the college campus offer guidance and encouragement to many of the students with the use of metaphors. This article offered a series of metaphors derived from Greek mythology. Hopefully these ideas may offer a creative and fun way to engage and educate college students. While many psychotherapists utilize *bibliotherapy* in which the client is encouraged to read certain books to educate oneself on the nature of a specific topic, a similar process takes place in *videotherapy* by which the client views movies or videos. In any event the use of metaphors found in mythic images are both rich in diversity and universal in applicability. A knowledge of these myths may enable college students who seek counseling to pass through the path of the hero (and heroine) and continue in the greater adventures of life beyond graduation.

References

Campbell, J. (1968). *The hero with a thousand faces*. New York: Bollingen Foundation.

Hillegass, C. K. (1973). *Mythology*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Cliff's Notes, Inc.

Morford, M. P. O. & Lenardon, R. J. (1971). *Classical Mythology*. New York: David McKay Co.

Osborn, K. & Burgess, D. L. (1998). *The complete idiot's guide to classical mythology*. New York: Alpha Books.

Sandoz, C. J. (1999) *The Freshman Odyssey: Freshman Seminar Course*. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette: Lafayette, LA.



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: <i>The FRESHMAN ODYSSEY: CLASSICAL METAPHORS FOR COUNSELING COLLEGE STUDENTS</i>	
Author(s): <i>CHARLES JEFFREY SANDOZ</i>	
Corporate Source: <i>AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS LA 3/24/02</i>	Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to each document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified documents, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate these documents as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: <i>Charles Jeffrey Sandoz PhD</i>	Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>CHARLES JEFFREY SANDOZ</i>	
Organization/Address: <i>SANDOZ COUNSELING</i>	Telephone: <i>337 482-1010</i>	FAX:
<i>430 S. UNION OPELOUSAS LA 70570</i>	E-Mail Address: <i>SANDOZ@LOUISIANA.EDU</i>	Date: <i>4/4/02</i>

American Counseling Association New Orleans, LA March 22-26, 2002

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of these documents from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of these documents. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: ERIC Counseling & Student Services University of North Carolina at Greensboro 201 Ferguson Building PO Box 26171 Greensboro, NC 27402-6171
